

My Paddle



SINGING:

Sing the song and keep a beat pretending to row a canoe. Explain that this is an American Indian song. Discuss the meaning of the song. Teach the song by echoing each phrase. Repeat clapping the rhythm as you sing. Divide the class in half. Have some of the students row to the beat while the others clap the rhythm of the words. You can have them pretend they are sitting one behind another in a canoe with four people. The front and back braves paddle the beat while the two middle braves clap the rhythm. They should sing as they perform this activity. The idea is for them to get to know the song well enough to sing it in a round. Do not try to teach the song and sing it in a round on the same day.

Harmony: After the class knows the melody very well. Divide the class in half and sing it in a round. You can also try singing the phrase “dip, dip and swing” as an ostinato (repeated pattern) throughout the entire song. You can perform the ostinato with the round. The more layering you do the more difficult the task becomes. This trains the students to become independent singers while working in context with others.

PLAYING:

Play the melodic ostinato “dip, dip and swing” on barred instruments, recorders, and /or boom whackers while others sing. Add a nice solid drum beat with the accent on beat one. The rhythm of the melodic ostinato could be played on a drum or other rhythm instrument instead of a melodic instrument. You could also create a larger theme and variation form combining singing activity with instrument activity.

Theme: Students sing the song with the drum beat to introduce the “My Paddle” Theme

Variation 1: Students sing song with melodic ostinato on barred instruments

Variation 2: Students play the rhythm of the song on drums

Variation 3: Students sing song in canon

CREATING:

Have the students use the rhythm of the “My Paddle” and create a different melody using the same pitches A, G, F, D. Students may use low or high A, G and D’s. If using barred instruments, make it easier for students by taking of unneeded bars. The tonal center is D so have the students end on the home tone of D to help their song sound complete. You could have one student accompany the created melodies by playing a steady beat on the bars D and A. Once students have completed their compositions perform them for each other. They could also be notated on staff paper and placed in their portfolio.

LISTENING:

Listen for the number of times the syncopated pattern eighth note, quarter note, eighth note is heard. Listen for that pattern in other songs such as “Weevily Wheat,” Li’l Liza Jane and “This Train.” You could also find recordings of American Indian music. Discuss the elements of music that make it sound the way it does. Listen for the strong accented beats. Listen for the quality in the vocal tones. Listen for the repetition in the rhythm and melodies of American Indian music. Move to the music in a circle responding to these elements.

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION: (Social Studies)

Compare and contrast American Indian lifestyle today to the past. Discuss modes of transportation, hunting, eating, drumming, art, dancing. What has changed? What has not changed? (music and dancing, carrying on the traditions of the ancestors is very important)

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